

Bronx community through times both of glory and of decline. Happily, this venerable institution survives not only to see the renaissance of the Bronx, but to contribute to it.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in extending best wishes to the Rev. Victor Aloyo, moderator of the Presbytery of New York and pastor of the Presbyterian Church of the Redeemer, and to the congregation and administration of Beck Memorial Presbyterian Church on the occasion of this momentous celebration.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

SPEECH OF

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 22, 1997

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Breast Cancer Awareness Month and to honor those women who are forced to live with this disease and to their families who support them during their time of need.

While we stand here and recognize October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, I realize that in many families every month is Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

Sometimes because a mother is fighting the disease;

Sometimes because an aunt is in remission from the disease;

Sometimes because a grandmother lost her life to breast cancer;

Or in my case, because my sister is fighting this silent predator.

As if it is not enough that today over 2.5 million women in America are living with breast cancer, we read story after story about the additional hardships these women are made to endure.

Some women are forced out of a hospital 12 hours after a radical mastectomy with tubes left in their back and no one to assist them;

Some women are denied reconstructive surgery following a mastectomy and are told that it is deemed cosmetic—an excuse that masquerades the truth that denying coverage is merely a cost-savings measure;

Some women who have already lost several family members to breast cancer fear they will lose their job or health insurance if they decide to be genetically tested in an attempt to save themselves;

Some women are denied access to the full menu of medical options of breast cancer treatment because their physician has been gagged by the health plan for which he works;

Some women are diagnosed with an advanced stage of breast cancer because of a prior false negative test result and no insurance coverage for a second opinion.

These are real stories of real women who not only had to fight breast cancer, but then had to fight a health care plan which practiced bottom-line medicine instead of patient-first medicine.

Breast cancer survivors must be treated with compassion and dignity, not as an accounting figure. This is why I introduced the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1997, H.R. 616. This legislation:

Ensures coverage for inpatient hospital care for women following a mastectomy, lumpectomy, or lymph node dissection for a period determined by the physician and patient;

Allows for coverage of second opinions for all cancer diagnosis for men and women, whether negative or positive;

Requires coverage of reconstructive surgery for breast cancer patients—including symmetrical reconstruction; and

Protects physicians from retribution for recommending longer stays.

One breast cancer survivor wrote the following about the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act: "It would be a wonderful feeling knowing that until there is a cure for this horrible disease women would at least be able to face breast cancer with dignity and peace of mind knowing that their health care plan would stand with them and not against them."

The experiences of the thousands of breast cancer survivors have made me realize that we should have no greater priority than empowering those with breast cancer the right and ability to play an active role in the management of their treatment. It is our obligation as leaders to ensure them that their medical treatment is in the hands of physicians, not insurance companies. It is a profound injustice when health care forgets about the patient, yet with regard to mastectomy recovery and breast reconstruction following a mastectomy, that is just what has been done.

Let's put the reality of this disease in perspective. When a woman is told that she has breast cancer, the feeling that immediately follows the initial denial is lack of control. My bill is a patient's bill aimed at providing patients, in consultation with their physicians, a greater degree of autonomy when deciding appropriate medical care and, therefore, taking back control of their lives.

Some people call the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act a mandate. How is this a mandate when I only ask that patients get what they pay for—health insurance. If health insurance can abandon you, ignore you, or even kill you, it isn't insurance.

Now, to be clear, all insurance companies are not so insensitive as to not provide these basic benefits and, therefore, all will not be affected by this legislation. But we have a responsibility to protect the doctor/patient relationship, ensuring that the medical needs of patients are fully addressed.

The Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act should be the top social issue for the 105th Congress. I ask my colleagues to join me in making that a reality.

Lastly, my heart goes out to the women struggling with this disease, for whom we hold this special order tonight.

BETWEEN PEACE AND TERROR

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 28, 1997

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about terrorism. The suicide bombings at the pedestrian mall on Ben Yehuda Street in Jerusalem captivated my attention. Just days before the terrorist act, I had been there, in the exact spot of detonation.

In addition to the 3 Palestinian bombers, 4 innocent people died, more than 170 were injured. Three weeks prior, two Hamas members walked into an open-air market in Jerusalem, blew themselves up and killed 15 civilians. The total number of Israelis killed since the signing of the Oslo peace agreement in 1993 now exceeds 250.

While some may speculate on motives, I have come to my own conclusion: Suicide bombings on civilian targets are not meant to fulfill some thoughtful act of persuasion. They are designed to kill people—period.

My mission in Israel was sponsored by the United States—based non-profit American Israel Education Foundation. Five other Members of Congress made up our party. Our meetings with various Israeli and Palestinian leaders and officers, and United States Embassy officials, persuaded me that the Hamas terrorists didn't act alone.

The suicide bombers relied upon considerable help to plan, fund, and execute their terror. The bombings could have and should have been prevented.

My colleagues and I, who studied Israel together fired off a terse letter to Palestinian Chairman Yassir Arafat on September 8. "As members of the United States Congress who have supported our country's efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East, we are writing to express our collective outrage not only at the latest terrorist attack in Jerusalem, but at the indifference you continue to demonstrate at the brutal murder of innocent Israeli citizens," the letter read.

We supported our belief that Arafat had failed to fulfill the most fundamental commitments he had made to the peace agreements at Oslo. Because of that failure to take decisive actions against terrorism, the peace process is now on the verge of collapse. This is certainly not in the best interest of his own people.

Clearly, the peace process is seriously set back, perhaps mortally. By ending security cooperation with Israel and by resorting to inflammatory rhetoric, Yasser Arafat has left himself with only one option at this point: Comply with every term in the agreements he has made.

On her recent visit to the Middle East, Secretary of State Madeline Albright failed to press this point to a sufficient degree. There are plenty of issues upon which to measure the merit of further attempts to maintain Oslo, but the fact remains, that the PLO charter still calls for the destruction of Israel. Senior Palestinian Negotiator, Dr. Saeed Erekat looked me right in the eyes and assured me the pernicious clause would be removed by now.

If the United States is to ever expect the successful resumption of peace negotiations, it must demand specific responses from Arafat. The Palestinian Covenant must be amended, and the inflammatory rhetoric must end. Full security cooperation must be restored including the transfer to Israel of jailed terrorists accused of murdering Israelis and dramatic reduction of the Palestinian police force in accordance with the 1995 Oslo II agreement.

Moreover, the Palestinian Authority must take concrete steps to arrest and punish terrorists, confiscate their weapons and crush the underground network of support which makes terrorist attacks possible.

Unless the United States can pressure Arafat to honor the terms of past agreements,